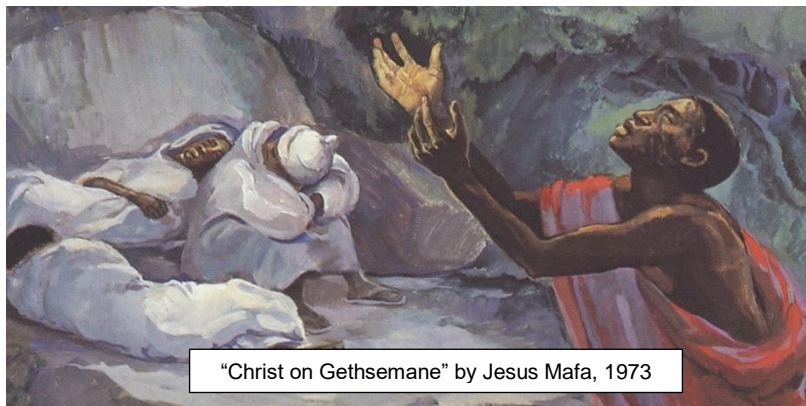


**Hope United Church of Christ
Worship Bulletin
Entering the Passion of Jesus
Sixth Sunday in Lent: Palm Sunday
“The Garden: Risking Temptation”
April 5, 2020 10:00 a.m.**

Welcome & Announcements
Prelude



“Christ on Gethsemane” by Jesus Mafa, 1973

ENTERING THE STORY

During Lent, we have taken six weeks to move through one week—the last week of Jesus’ human life. This has allowed us to expand time—to “freeze frame” important moments and dig deeper into our faith story, and our own stories. This morning marks the end of Lent and the beginning of our commemoration of Holy Week, and so let us speed up time a bit as we first remember the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Opening Hymn: All Glory Laud and Honor #216 (St. Theodulph)

At this time, please wave your palms at home! Feel free to get up and parade around your room! Celebrate and enjoy this time and reflect on all the ways you experience Jesus entering your life and your experiences.

**All glory, laud, and honor to you O Christ, we sing,
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way;
Our praise and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.**

**O Promised One of Israel, of David’s royal line,
The one called “God’s beloved,” of flesh and yet divine,
To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise;
To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.**

**As you received their praises, receive our prayers today,
Whose justice and whose mercy and sovereignty hold sway.
All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ, we sing,
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!**

(Tune: Text: Theodulph of Orléans (9th century); trans. John Mason Neale, 1854, alt. Text © 1993, The Pilgrim Press. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE # 733028-A)

We found our place in the parade and considered OUR place in the picture—our role as supporters of Jesus’ mission in the world. And then we found ourselves in the midst of the chaos and throngs of people in Jerusalem for the Passover. We stopped there, suspending the action for a moment, wondering how we could join Jesus in clearing out our own lives and hearts, our own places of worship, to make them a more welcoming place for the love of God to reside fully. We followed Jesus as he continued to teach in the city and among the people at the temple. His teachings filled our hearts as they filled those long ago, and we remembered the call to proclaim justice in the midst of

injustice wherever we find it. We joined the disciples at a table of extravagant affection and overflowing love, and then another supper where all our assumptions about the way the world works were turned upside-down. This week, we join Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane where a chain of events begins that cannot be halted. Once Jesus is taken into custody, there is no going back. So we pause a moment with him in the garden just before his arrest, and we feel with him the temptations that arise when facing difficult circumstances—to run, hide, use whatever power we have to change things, fight it, perhaps even bargain with God. We walk among the sleepy disciples who just can't grasp what is about to happen.

SUNG RESPONSE

"Enter the Passion"

Congregation: Marcia McFee and Chuck Bell

En - ter... En-ter the pas - sion... En-ter the place we be-long,
 not just look-ing on. For this is our pas-sion... En-ter the pas-sion...
 En-ter the sto-ry... En-ter the pas-sion... En-ter His pas-sion...

Prayer of Confession

Let us pray together:

Loving God, Here we are. We find ourselves alongside Jesus in a garden of grief. We grieve for the struggle so many are experiencing and we grieve for our feelings of isolation and loss. We grieve for the fear that so many people, including ourselves, are feeling. We are tired. We don't know what to do next. And so we sleep sometimes, hoping to awake from a bad dream. Forgive us, O God. Help us face this hour knowing you are always here. You only ask the same of us - to be present, to be awake. Gracious and loving God, empower us with the Holy Spirit so that our lives continually glorify you and our tongues forever confess Jesus as Lord. You entered our story through Jesus, now help us to enter fully into the story of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon and Entering the Peace of Christ

Know this: We can open our hearts and our minds to let the story remind us that no matter what we face, or how we fail to meet the demand of the moment, second chances are possible. God's mercy and unconditional love for God's creation makes this so. You are forgiven and freed, encouraged and loved by our God who wants you to live fully. Let us enter the passion of Christ, and pass the peace of Christ with each other.

If you are using this liturgy as a private devotion or participating in the live stream worship, please hold out your hands in blessing for all you are joined with in spirit. If you are participating in the live stream worship, please type in your peace greeting.

Prayers of God's People/Lord's Prayer (debts)

Gracious God,

On this Holy day of Palm Sunday and remembering the Passion of Jesus, we have so many mixed feelings inside of us. We remember your son's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem with the people shouting praises and waving Palm Branches. And we join them with our own praises and yet we are also aware that the praises and celebrations came to an end and turned quickly into shouts of "Crucify Him!" We admit there have been times we have fallen asleep like the disciples did – and did not pay attention to your guidance in our lives. When we hear the story of Jesus praying in the garden, we are reminded again of our own fears and feelings of anxiety, dread, and doom. Our hearts are broken by those very shouts, the betrayal, the doubts, and the pain and suffering Jesus experienced. And yet we know that it is because of his choosing to enter Jerusalem and taking the path he knew he was taking, there is hope, grace, love and salvation for all. And there are many in need of hope in our world. There are many in need of your grace in our world. There are many in need of your love in our world. And there are many in need of salvation in our world. Holy One, bless your servants: the ones missing palms and parades and processions and passion, and the ones who wish we could line the church aisle with cloaks. Be with all those who are worshiping all over your creation, alone yet together in Spirit.

Hear our prayers to cover in your blessings all those who are working so hard in our hospitals, clinics, care facilities, prisons, military facilities and Navy ships, and in their homes caring for the sick and dying. Bless, strengthen, and protect them, God, and hold all those they care for in your loving arms. Grant your peace and bring strength and courage to all those who face economic hardship, stress, and fear. Bring us the wisdom and courage to offer help and assistance wherever it is needed. Bless our local, state and national leadership, God. We pray that they will work together to guide us through this and lead us as we hope they will.

We ask your blessings and healing mercy for all who suffer including Jennifer, Daniel, Pam, and Marlene. Bless them and hold them all in your healing love.

Hear the prayers we lift to you now...

Lord, enter our lives, our churches, our cities, our countries once again today. Heal us, Lord.

Transform us. Renew us. Draw us closer to you in this journey of Holy Week, empower us with strength and courage and with the assurance that you are with us, world without end as we say together the prayer Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

~ adapted from a prayer by Rev. Abi, and posted on her Long and Winding Road blog

GETTING PERSPECTIVE

Telling the Story

New Testament Lesson

Ephesians 6:11-17

Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil

day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Gospel Lesson

Mark 14:32-42

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Sermon: "Stay Awake"

Offertory

We are profoundly grateful for your continued support of Hope UCC as we stay connected as a faith community in this time of social distancing and spiritual connection. As we continue the ministry of our church and live as God's people, we invite you to mail your offering to the church office – mail and messages are checked daily by Pastor Santina. Thank you for your generosity- your commitment is vital to continuing our congregation's ministries and commitments. Hope Grows! And there is nothing, not even a global pandemic, which can stop it! 😊

Prayer of Dedication

We offer our gifts to you, O God, as palms were offered to welcome Jesus long ago. We lay them on your altar in praise, thanksgiving, and joy. Receive the gifts and blessings you have given us, God, back from our hands, that they may become a greater blessing in your hands. In Jesus' name, Amen.

ENTERING THE WORLD'S STORY

Benediction

Although we are apart, we are together. God is with us in this time and in all times. Our worship together has ended, but our love for one another, for God, and God's creation never ends. My the love of Christ Jesus ever enfold you, the love of God ever encircle you, and the power of the Holy Spirit ever enrich you, now and for all our days. Amen!